

Paulsen: New Leadership Needed at VA

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Washington, D.C.— Congressman Erik Paulsen (MN-03) released the following statement regarding the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Inspector General's report on the investigation into the Phoenix VA hospital:

“The release of the Inspector General's report yesterday sadly confirmed what many of us feared is true about the Department of Veterans Affairs. The report shows over 1,700 veterans were kept off of the Phoenix VA hospital's official waiting list in order to make their wait times look more favorable. The hospital cooked their books to make it appear that veterans were waiting an average of 24 days for their first primary care appointment, when in reality these veterans were waiting five times as long. These actions are a betrayal to the brave men and women who served our country with honor. Those responsible must be held accountable.

“For years, the systemic problems at the VA have made it difficult to get our nation's veterans the care they deserve. It is clear that new leadership is needed. Secretary Shinseki has had over five years to make progress in reducing the claims backlog and improve the department to the level that our veterans deserve. It appears we are moving backwards from this goal. In light of the new revelations, I am asking that Secretary Shinseki resign from his position at the VA.

“Along with new leadership, the VA must go through a culture change to ensure our veterans receive the care they earned. Congress must do whatever it can to fix the problem. Last week, the House passed legislation giving more flexibility to fire poor employees and bring more accountability to the department. I encourage the Senate to promptly pass this legislation.”

Paulsen, a champion of small business and advocate of free enterprise, entrepreneurship, and innovation, serves on the House Ways and Means Committee, the bicameral Joint Economic Committee, and is co-chair of the Congressional Medical Technology Caucus.

For more information on Congressman Paulsen's work in Congress visit paulsen.house.gov.